

## Texas Forensic Implementation Team (TFIT) Description for the JCAFS

HHSC would like for the JCAFS to be aware of a forensic initiative that has been taking place over the past year with SAMHSA's GAINS Center. In 2019, Texas was competitively selected by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration as one of 6 states to participate in a Competency Restoration Community of Practice. This Community of Practice gives Texas and the other states that were selected an opportunity to receive free technical assistance from the GAINS Center and an opportunity to collaborate with other states regarding ways to improve our competency restoration procedures in Texas. There Sixteen leaders were selected as members for what we call the Texas Forensic Implementation Team, also known as TFIT. Representatives were specifically selected that have a direct involvement in various aspects of the competency restoration system in Texas including LMHA's, NAMI, Judicial Commission on Mental Health, the Sheriff's Association of Texas, Texas Commission on Jail Standards, Texas Indigent Defense Commission, Texas County and District Attorneys Association, Texas Department of Criminal Justice, Office of the Court Administrator, and Texas Tech University. HHSC leadership included DEC's Maples and Gaines and ACs Ita, Bray and Harvey.

Since last year the TFIT team has focused on making improvements in 4 priority areas. Those priority areas are: 1) Proficiency in early identification, assessment and treatment of defendants who are suspected of having a mental illness or an IDD diagnosis, 2) Address deficiencies in the CST examination and quality assurance, waitlist management, treatment, and case disposition, 3) Increase opportunities for competency evaluators, attorneys, judges and competency restoration providers to receive training related to CR trends and best practices and 4) Expand resources for diversion from the criminal justice system. Members of the TFIT team have split into small groups to work on priority areas that they specialize in.

In 2020, Texas continued to be a part of the SAMHSA GAINS Center's Community of Practice as it expanded to 9 states. This summer the GAINS Center has provided training workshops and technical assistance to each of the states in the community of practice, which we shared with this committee. The TFIT team is scheduled to participate in a strategic planning meeting with the GAINS Center on August 26<sup>th</sup> / 28th to set new goals for the upcoming year.

We want the JCAFS to aware of the work that is occurring with the TFIT team. We expect that there will be opportunities for the TFIT team to provide the JCAFS with information that will help the committee with its recommendations.

The TFIT team members include:

Dr. Jennie Simpson, HHSC, Forensic Director

Jim LaRue, Team Lead

Mike Maples, HHSC, Deputy Executive Commissioner, Health and Specialty Care System

Sonja Gaines, HHSC, Deputy Executive Commissioner, Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, Behavioral Health System

Bill Boyce, Judicial Commission on Mental Health, Commissioner

Kristi Taylor, Judicial Commission on Mental Health, Executive Director

Beth Lawson, Star Care Specialty Health System,

Susan Garnett, MHMR Tarrant

Scott Ehlers, Texas Indigent Defense Commission

Bryan Collier, Texas Department of Criminal Justice

Dennis Wilson, Limestone County Sheriff's Department/Past President of the Sheriffs Association of Texas

Greg Hansch, National Alliance of the Mentally Ill Texas

Robert Kepple, Texas County and District Attorneys Association

David Slayton, Office of Court Administration

Brandon Wood, Texas Commission on Jail Standards

Dr. Nancy Trevino, Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center, the Mental Health Institute

Billy Phillips, Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center, F. Marie Hall Institute for Rural and Community Health